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Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living

Medication Management for Seniors

Medications are important to help treat and heal illnesses and diseases. Medications can be helpful, but they can also be dangerous when not managed properly. For seniors, medications can be a disaster waiting to happen. The Health and Human Services stated 55% of the elderly are “non-compliant” with their prescription drug orders, meaning they don’t take the medication according to their doctor’s orders. Approximately 200,000 older adults are hospitalized annually due to adverse drug reactions.

There are certain steps you should follow to ensure you are taking medication properly and safely. These will make sure you get the full benefits from your medication and help you to avoid adverse effects from the medications you take.

1. Ask your pharmacist for large print on prescription bottles and ask they include the reason you are taking the medication. This helps with vision problems and allows you to avoid taking the wrong medicine if you have two medications that look or sound alike.
2. Use a Pill Organizer. There are many types of pill dispensers. Choose one that is best suited for you. This allows you and your family to avoid skipped
3. Use generic medication or ask your pharmacist about discount programs to help save cost. Many seniors may not be able to afford their medicines. Do not go without needed medications. Let your doctor or pharmacist know if you have problems paying for your medications.
4. Ask your pharmacist how the medicine will be taken. If you have swallowing problems make sure to ask for liquid medicines or ask if the medicine can be cut or crushed. Some medicines can not be crushed.



doses of medicine as well as duplicate doses, which can cause an overdose.

5. Get Instruction in writing about you prescriptions. If you have trouble hearing, talk to the doctor and pharmacist and don't be embarrassed about your hearing loss. If you can't hear the instruction you could take your medicines incorrectly.
6. Make a full list of medication and why you are taking those medications to every doctors appointment. Seniors often see several specialist and medication interactions can occur if physicians do not know all the medications you are taking. Include over the counter medicines, supplements, and vitamins as well.
7. Use only one pharmacy. Using one pharmacy allows the pharmacist to know exactly all the medications you are taking and helps to avoid medication interactions that can cause adverse effects.
8. Know how your medication must be stored. Medications should not be stored in the window, in bathrooms, or in the car. Extreme temperatures and moisture can cause medications not to work or work improperly. Always be aware of how your medicines are being stored at home and during travel.



9. Ask for help. Many seniors may live alone and when that often leads to seniors failing to comply with medication instructions. Ask for in-home help with medications.
10. Keep all medicines up out of the reach of children and out of site of strangers in your home.

Always Remember

Your pharmacist is an important resource to help you manage your medicines. Ask questions and keep them informed of side effects. They can help keep the doctor notified.

References:

National Institute for Senior Health— www.nihseniorhealth.gov

Pharmacy times—www.pharmacytimes.com

Aging Care—www.agingcare.com

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